

## ANSWER TO CHALLENGE ABOUT PRESERVATION ARTICLE

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December 29, 2000 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061-0368, fbns@wayoflife.org) - On December 26, I published the article "Fundamentalists Following Textual Critics in Questioning/Denying Preservation." Following is one of the challenges I received about it. As this one is representative of several others, I want to reply to it. (The following communication from John Banks was not sent to me personally but was sent out publicly to an e-mail list in Canada, so I am taking the liberty of re-publishing it here.)

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Sent: Wednesday, December 27, 2000 6:40 PM  
To: Independent Baptists Canada  
Subject: Fundamentalists Following Textual Critics

"I think the article submitted 'Fundamentalists Following Textual Critics in Denying/Questioning Biblical Preservation' deserves some evaluation. Perhaps others could comment.

"It looks to me in the article that David Cloud wrote that he is defining his own brand of preservation and then implies that his view is the biblical one, as indicated by the title, and discounts many fundamentalists as people who really do not believe in a preservation of scripture. Again the view of preservation that makes preservation synonymous or the equivalent of inspiration is the flawed one and a very rare one historically in Baptist circles. This was not the position held especially by those who took the lead with the separatist stance at the turn of the century that helped produce most of the twentieth century Baptist and fundamentalist churches. This has been admitted. (i.e. J. Frank Norris, John R. Rice, Bob Jones, T.T. Shields, certainly J. Gresham Machen etc.) Therefore the logic is flawed that sees this issue as the main one leading to New Evangelicalism. A greater problem in our circles that may lead some toward the New Evangelical camp is a reaction of being horrified by the extremes and

intolerance of brethren fighting for an exclusive position for the King James and their willingness to overlook truth, their willingness to claim that their position is the historic one, and basically aiming their guns at brethren who accept preservation but are not willing to accept an extreme or flawed definition of it. For some this type of thing developing in Baptist fundamentalism pushes them in a different direction. The position that sees a deviation from the KJV as a test of soundness is basically a rewriting of the historic boundaries that defines the Independent Baptist movement. For some this kind of hype or dishonesty is enough to push them toward a vulnerability with New Evangelicalism. For others it will not matter but it is a real problem.

“Again, it is, in my opinion, dishonest to imply that those who do not hold to a King James Only type of position do not believe in preservation. Some within the ranks of fundamentalism are always going to slip side-ways into either a position of denying preservation or to a position of overstating the case for one translation out of zeal for what they believe is true or other things. That some may have denied preservation (as David Cloud indicates) is no grounds for disparaging the positions held by fundamentalists and Baptists historically on inspiration and preservation (David Cloud is not really so clear about this in his article. He does not appear to be willing to let a man correct and refine his position but capitalizes on mistakes or inaccuracies. We need to give a pastor the benefit of the doubt and the ability to clarify his position and then accept his clarification as representing his own view). Any step too far to the right or to the left on this issue are steps toward heresy. One clear examination of any Textus Receptus ought to be enough to convince anyone who has even an elementary knowledge of the Greek language or even those who don't have any knowledge of Greek, that no manuscript line has perfectly preserved the original even if the content of the original is there. No one has to take anyone else's opinion on this including David Cloud. We likely have all said that it is never right for Christians to do wrong (i.e. use hype) even in the defense of a position in order to get a chance to do right. God would be ruthlessly honest even about His enemies. We should not be a type of fundamentalist lawyer who seeks to defend his own position at all costs if there is truth to be admitted on either side of a debate. God does not use error to defend himself and expects us to admit when someone has spoken some truth. It is usually our willingness as independent Baptist's to use hype (exaggeration), or our inability to admit that we have been wrong that eventually gets us into a great deal of trouble and infighting with each other.

“The title ‘Fundamentalists Following Textual Critics in Denying/Questioning Biblical Preservation’ seems like a newspaper headline deliberately worded to bend a persons thinking toward a stance already accepted, and to use a natural inclination toward fear, paranoia, etc. as a way of gaining support for a position. Christians should know better especially when we are dealing with one

another. It is the kind of thing where believers should know that like a newspaper that you had better be careful about the content and not take an article at face value.

“By the way - I believe that Psalm 12:7 teaches preservation but I can not see that only the KJV is in view.”

John Banks

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#### REPLY FROM BROTHER CLOUD:

It amazes me how so many fellows dodge the main issues and go off on their own rabbit trails. The main two points of my article “Fundamentalists Following Textual Critics in Questioning/Denying Preservation” were are follows:

(1) The fathers of modern textual criticism have denied (or ignored or slighted) biblical preservation from the beginning in the 19th century. The authors of textual criticism have largely treated the Bible as an ordinary book that has passed through time. This crucial point was ignored in the challenges I received. The evangelicals (and fundamentalists) did not father modern textual criticism. They have merely adopted it “from the mint of infidel rationalism,” to use the words of Robert Dabney, the noted American Presbyterian scholar who stood against modern textual criticism in the 19th century. I have documented this in my article “Textual Criticism and Infidelity” (see the Way of Life web site <http://www.wayoflife.org>) and in the book Myths about Modern Bible Versions.

It continues to be true today that the recognized textual critics are the modernists who approach the Bible as fallible and who care nothing whatsoever about divine preservation. All of the editors, for example, of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament are theological modernists. (One is a Catholic cardinal.)

It is a strange sight to behold fundamentalists following the modernists in the matter of textual criticism. It is a strange sight to see fundamentalist schools promoting books by theological modernists like Bruce Metzger and Kurt Aland in their classrooms and bookstores. (Of course, they always pretend that they are independent thinkers and that they don’t really follow the textual critics, but the fact remains that there are no recognized fundamentalist textual critics. There are no fundamentalist scholars today who have developed any new theories of textual criticism or who have done any significant research in this matter. They have merely borrowed the criticism of the modernists; or at best they have borrowed the criticism of the New Evangelicals who have, in their turn, borrowed it from the modernists.) To return to the main point of the article, if you use the tools of

modern textual criticism, you are using tools developed by men who have approached the Bible as fallible and as not divinely preserved. That is a fact that no amount of blustering, issue dodging, and criticism of King James Bible defenders can take away.

Dr. Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate from Harvard in textual criticism, pointed out this problem back in the 1950s. His excellent book *The King James Version Defended* is still available today. In fact, it is on the web at the following address: <http://www.jesus-is-lord.com/kjvdefen.htm>

(2) I also made the point in the article on preservation that some fundamental Baptists are now openly denying or questioning biblical preservation. I would think every Bible believer would be concerned about this, but instead of being disturbed about those who are denying preservation, some are much more disturbed about those who believe in preservation. I don't understand the mindset that looks upon men who believe there are no errors in the Bible as the enemies of the Bible, while looking upon men who believe all Bibles have many errors as the friends of the Bible.

#### DID FUNDAMENTALISTS OF OLD STAND FOR THE KJV?

The writer of the previous e-mail stated that "the view of preservation that makes preservation synonymous or the equivalent of inspiration is the flawed one and a very rare one historically in Baptist circles." He names several fundamental Baptist leaders such as John Rice and Bob Jones, using them to allegedly prove that fundamentalists of old did not defend the KJV and did not make an issue of Bible versions.

I have answered this in the article "Old-Time Fundamentalists Who Defended the King James Bible." See the Way of Life web site: <http://wayoflife.org/~dcloud>. In this article I named two prominent fundamentalist leaders of old who defended the King James Bible on the same basis that I defend it today. Many others could have been mentioned. I have documented this more extensively in my book *For Love of the Bible*, which traces the defense of the KJV and the TR from 1800 to present.

We could also go back far beyond the origin of the fundamentalists to see that Bible believers in the 16th and 17th centuries commonly viewed inspiration and preservation as twin doctrines. Consider the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1648: "The Old Testament in Hebrew . . . and the New Testament in Greek . . . being immediately inspired by God, and BY HIS SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them." The same

words were used in the London Baptist Confession of 1677 and the Philadelphia Confession of 1742. The Protestant Confession of Faith, London, 1679, is even plainer and includes the Received Text English Bible in its statement of preservation: "And by the holy scriptures we understand, the canonical books of the old and new testament, AS THEY ARE NOW TRANSLATED INTO OUR ENGLISH MOTHER-TONGUE, OF WHICH THERE HATH NEVER BEEN ANY DOUBT OF THEIR VERITY AND AUTHORITY, in the protestant churches of Christ to this day."

Unlike the misguided textual critics of the 19th century, Bible believers of an earlier era were not trying to find the Scriptures, for the simple reason that they did not believe the Scriptures were lost! Instead, they were busy preaching the Scriptures to the ends of the earth.

There are many things about the Bible version issue in general and about preservation in specific that I cannot answer. There are many things on this issue that simply must be taken by faith. But after 15 years of intensive research on this issue there are two things that I have such confidence in that I do not fear taking them to the judgment seat of Christ: (1) The preserved Word of God was not hid away in an obscure monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai or in the dark recesses of the Pope's library. It was preserved not in the disuse but in the usage by God's people, and that, my friends, leads me to the Massoretic Text in Hebrew, the Received Text in Greek, to the King James Bible in English, and to faithful translations thereof in other languages. (2) Modern textual criticism is not a true science but, like evolution, is a false religious faith based upon unscriptural premises. Dr. Edward F. Hills documented this back in the 1950s, and I believe what he said about it.

For my part, I believe the King James Bible is a faithful rendering of the preserved Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic texts, while other standard modern English translations are based upon the faulty and rationalistic theories and practice of modern textual criticism. (The New King James Bible is yet another category and another story in itself, which we do not have the time to go into here.) If that is heresy or extremism, let me be counted among the heretics and extremists. Most Bible believers of bygone days were labeled heretics by the mainstream "church" of the day. Since I was saved by God's grace in 1973, I have not been afraid of being rejected by the mainstream (and that includes the mainstream of fundamentalism).

May the Lord grant each of us much wisdom and grace in these evil days.

In Christ,  
David Cloud

See also the following articles at the Way of Life web site:

<http://wayoflife.org/~dcloud/fbns/versfbns.htm>

“Old-Time Fundamentalists Who Defended the King James Bible”

“Did David Otis Fuller Get His View of the KJV from a Cultist?”

“Textual Criticism Is Drawn from the Wells of Infidelity”

“Examining James White’s ‘The King James Only Controversy’”

“Are Modern Versions Based on Westcott and Hort?”

“Can Evangelicals Be Trusted on Bible Versions?”

“Is the Received Text Based on a Few Late Manuscripts?”

“Which Edition of the Received Text Is the Preserved Word of God?”

See also the Bible Version Issue Question-Answer Database

<http://wayoflife.org/~dcloud/fbns/questionsanswered.htm>